

Congratulations to the Winners of the Teen Writing Challenge

Grades 9—12

2nd Place—Cory Kleinman

The Stars

From where I stand in the
trenches

I try to find the white
tears of God

Gleaming in the sky.

I cannot see the stars.
They are lost.

I am lost.

I cannot see God's eyes
Watching over me.

I am alone.

Like a summer storm in
the dead of night,

I am alone.

Why is there this endless
shelling

When we are lost? I can
not see the stars.

I must be a madman.
They must be madmen.

The fear creeps through
my bones

Heating my mind. I run
wild with fear.

I am a madman, but I
am not alone.

We are all madmen.

Where are the stars?

The guns fire and the
whistles blow.

I follow my comrades in-
to danger,

Blood, and death.

Where I go life cannot fol-
low.

I try to find the stars one
last time.

They are lost.

There is a warm breeze
blowing.

The hairs on the back of
my neck stand on end.

I can smell home.

The tears start to come.

I smell Mama's cooking
and Father's lumber,

I smell home and trees and
pines and flowers.

I can see the flowers
and buds

Meeting the sun for the
first time.

And now I know I will
never see them.

For one painful moment

I see little Janey on the
porch, beckoning.

She smiles to reassure me.

Everything will be alright.

I look up one last time,

And faintly I can see little
pinpricks of light.

I am no longer alone. I
follow her.

Death closes its doors
behind me

But no longer am I afraid.

